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SCHOOL VANDALISM IN ALBERTA

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE NATURE, COSTS AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

September, 1976
Dr. C. Schott
The University of Lethbridge
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I. STATUS STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

In the last few years school vandalism, an incident formerly associated with the presence in school of a few destructive "bad boys" and, perhaps, some "psychotics", has taken on the magnitude of a major social and economic problem for educators. What actually is the extent of increase in destruction? What is its cost to Alberta taxpayers?

It must be emphasized at this time that the total cost of vandalism in Canada is an uncertainty and at best an educated guess. There is no accurate tally sheet. There is no national repository where such losses are reported by the provincial governments. Nor, apparently, do the provinces themselves keep any kind of definitive records. This deficiency is what prompted an interest on the author's part to research the precise status of vandalism in the schools of Alberta. A research proposal was made and subsequently funded by the Department of Education. Accordingly, each shool district and division was surveyed in the spring of 1975 on the extent of damage due to vandalism during the calendar year 1974. The returns were then tabulated into four categories of damage: glass; building and contents; theft; arson.

The results are as follows:

Total cost for all schools in all categories.....$1,981,885

(a) Glass damage.....$363,491

(b) Building and contents..... 374,098

(c) Theft..... 42,995

(d) Arson.....1,201,301

Perhaps one of the most significant features of the status study of school vandalism in the Province of Alberta is the rather invidious comparison in costs between the public and separate school systems as well as between the urban and rural.

In almost all categories of school vandalism, in virtually every category of school demography the total costs went far beyond a simple mathematical progression dependent on school population figures, as indicated below:

Glass Damage by school category:

(1) Urban.....$324,995
Rural..... 38,496

The costs per pupil in urban schools for glass damage was $1.03 compared to .22 for rural schools - almost five times higher.

(2) Public.....$306,416
Separate..... 57,075

Costs per pupil was virtually the same - .74 and .75, respectively.

(3) Public Urban.....$276,068
Separate Urban..... 48,927

Public Urban schools per pupil costs were 20% higher than that of Separate Urban schools - $1.08 and .80 respectively.

(4) Public Rural..... $30,348
Separate Rural..... 8,148

*Per pupil costs was three times higher for Separate Rural schools - .54 and .19, respectively.

Building Damage by school category:

(1) Urban.....$343,216
Rural..... 30,882

Costs per pupil was six times higher for urban schools than rural - $1.08 and .18, respectively.

(2) Public.....$363,592
Separate..... 10,506

The costs per pupil was six times higher for the public schools than separate - .88 and .14, respectively.

(3) Public Urban.....$338,650
Separate Urban..... 4,556

Costs per pupil was approximately 20 times higher for public urban schools than separate urban - $1.33 and .07, respectively.

(4) Public Rural..... $24,942
Separate Rural..... 5,940

*Costs per pupil was 2½ times higher for separate rural schools than public rural - .16 and .40, respectively.

Theft by school category:

(1) Urban..... $31,936
Rural..... 11,059

Costs per pupil due to theft was 40% less for rural schools than urban - .10 and .06, respectively.

Theft by school category (cont'd)

(2) Public.....$38,140
Separate..... 4,855

Costs per pupil in separate schools was one-third that of public schools - .09 and .06, respectively.

(3) Public Urban..... $27,563
Separate Urban..... 4,373

Costs per pupil was 40% less for separate urban schools than for public urban - .11 and .07, respectively.

(4) Public Rural..... $10,577
Separate Rural..... 482

Costs per pupil in public rural schools was more than double that of separate rural schools - .07 and .03, respectively.

Arson by school category:

(1) Urban..... $1,030,905
Rural..... 170,396

Costs per pupil in urban schools was $3.24 compared to .98 for rural - better than three times the cost.

(2) Public..... $995,913
Separate..... 205,388

Public and Separate school per pupil cost was virtually the same: $2.41 for public schools and slightly higher for separate - $2.71.

(3) Public Urban..... $830,647
Separate Urban..... 200,258

Per pupil costs in public urban schools was $3.65 compared to separate urban - $2.93.

(4) Public Rural..... $165,266
Separate Rural..... 5,130

Costs per pupil in public rural schools was three times that of separate rural - $1.05 and .33, respectively.

Arson does not seem to have a particular chronological pattern. The two major incidents reported occurred in January and in March, while the month of May had the lowest damage reported.

*These were the only instances where separate school costs per pupil exceeded that of the public schools and this anomoly is probably due to the relatively small number of school districts in this category (158-15) and the smaller school population which undoubtedly affects the reliability of this particular comparison.

In examining the school vandalism pattern throughout the calendar year, one notes that there are high and low points which may have implications for security coverage and custodial assignments. For instance, the high point for all category schools is the month of August when $44,000, or approximately 11% of the total glass damage, occurs. The low point would appear to be the month of January ($16,000, or less than 4%).

May is the high point of the year for building damage (40,000 - better than 10% of the total), while August is the low point ($16,000 - approximately 3% of the total).

Theft has its high point in March ($5,400, or 13% of the total), while the low point is in July, $1,600, or 3½%).

Analysis of the number of vandalism incidents for schools of all categories indicates a total of 12,000 with the highest number of incidents occurring in November: 1,400 and the lowest during July and August: 600 each month.

The average cost per incident was $156, with the highest cost per incident occurring in January: $211.

Now that we have a more valid basis for answering the query raised about costs to the Alberta taxpayer earlier in this article, we must concern ourselves with seeking the answers to the concommitant questions which logically flow and to which school administrators, trustees and maintenance supervisors should be seriously addressing themselves. Why is it being done? How can these delinquent acts against the school be stopped or substantially decreased? What are the immediate steps that can be taken? What are the long-range solutions?

Public property of all types appears to offer a peculiar allurement to children bent on destruction: parks, playground, highway signs, trees, shrubs, flowers, benches, golf courses, libraries, railroads, public monuments, vacant houses and theatres. While it is true that hardly any property is immune from this form of agression, schools are a particularly vulnerable target for vandals; windows are smashed, records, books, desks, typewriters and other equipment are frequently stolen or destroyed. If the Alberta experience as indicated above is typical, and there is no reason to believe

that it is not, then the replacement cost figures for property damage due to vandalism in the schools throughout Canada must be staggeringly incredible

In addition to the question of the costs involved, there are additional reasons for concern. One consequence frequently overlooked by the general public and at times by educators themselves, is the interference with the regular educational program that the destruction of school property may bring about. Broken windows create physical discomfort in the classroom, to say nothing of the disconcerting effect on aesthetic appearance. Damage to schoo facilities such as laboratory equipment, audio-visual aids, books,desks, maps very likely has an adverse qualitative effect on classroom performance. The destruction of lighting and lavatory facilities may constitute a hazard to the health of students while damaged fire extinguishers and fire exit doors may endanger life itself. And finally, as one investigator claims, the overt presence of the depradations committed by vandals may have a harmful physchological effect on the students.[1] To this I would add the discouraging and depressing effect it must also have on the classroom teacher.

There is yet another and even broader aspect of concern, and that is the threat that school vandalism poses to the order of the social system itself. Goldman observes:

> "The wanton destruction of school property represents a simultaneous threat to two important values of our society - education and property. The school vandal attacks both these highly valued institutions. He thus exhibits behavior hostile to certain crucial aspects of our accepted way of life. Such an attack on our institutional values by the child may be a portent of more serious attacks on society when he reaches the adult age."[2]

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[1] Nathan Goldman, "A Socio-Psychological Study of School Vandalism", H.E.W., Cooperative Research Study # SAE 181, pp. 2-3

[2] Ibid., p.3

II. NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

No discussion of the problem of school vandalism would be complete without a discussion of causation and prevention. A review of the literature on vandalism reveals a paucity of investigative research in this field. There is a pressing need for establishing a distinguishing behavioral typology of this particular aspect of the broad spectrum generally circumscribed in the research under juvenile delinquency. Just in what manner this particular form of delinquent act comes into being and is carried out has received virtually little attention. And while the impression is generally held that vandalism is a deliberate and malicious act, in actuality, according to Clinard and Wade,[3] much of the property destruction by juveniles is spontaneous and is the outgrowth of group rather than individual action, having social, cultural and ecological determinants.

According to Wade,[4] acts of vandalism may be:

1) deliberately planned - (a rare occurrence)
2) a fortuitous development - (the result of a play situation)
3) a catalyst for a series of unplanned additional acts as the element of mutual excitation takes hold of the participants.

He describes vandalism as usually falling into five situational contexts:

1) Waiting for something to turn up - much of the free time after school is spent in unstructured situations - characterized as "messing around" - actors are poised, ready for an action-provoking suggestion. Aimless talk and bull sessions provide chance for gossip - talk concerns what others have done - escapades of contemporaries. "Things get around from boy to boy."

2) Play situation - destructive activity may itself be a form of play or spontaneous outgrowth of play situation. Generally takes form of a game of skill - quantity or quality of destruction is emphasized although not necessarily orginally intended as the goal of the play activity. On other occasions the destruction is subordinate: what primarily counts is one's ability to hit a target - with a BB gun, pellet gun or stone.

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[3]Marshall Clinard & Andrew Wade, "Toward the Delineation of Vandalism as a sub-type in Juvenile Delinquencey" J. of Criminology and Police Science -48: pp. 493-499, Jan.-Feb. '58.

[4]Wade, Andrew L., "Social Processes in the Act of Juvenile Vandalism," Arnold Madison, Vandalism, 1970, pp. 99-105.

3) Exploratory gesture - an essentially unstructured situation wherein an action-provoking suggestion is made by one of the members of group involving an activity which offers the possibility for some excitement and relief from boredom. The suggested action might initially only involve a challenge to an individual's courage and daring with the resultant vandalism simply a by-product of the initial activity.

4) Mutual Conversion - group activity demands agreement among perspective paricipants and an implicit pressure to join in order to enhance status within the group or prevent status deterioration, e.g., being labelled "chicken". The individual undergoes an internal dilemma involving adherence to the norms of the larger social system as opposed to the demands for loyalty and conformity by the peer group with the latter usually winning out in the internalized struggle because of the more immediate promise of gratification of social need and psychological reward. The eventual submission to group pressure is indicative of the value that is placed on peer acceptance. For those individuals who already have a history of delinquent acts, the conversion process is neither lengthy or complex.

5) Joint Elaboration - at this stage there is a spontaneous eruption of wholesale vandalism once the spirit of the activity takes hold and thus stimulates the participants to excesses. There is often an element of "mutual excitation" wherein a competition develops to see who can wreak the most damage. This "group psychological intoxication" sets up a situation where one participant's behavior becomes the model and source of reinforcement for another.

> "The functional value of mutual excitation or group contagion is of particular importance in vandalism. A primary function of this element is the tendency for the individual to lose his feeling of self-identity in the prevailing group interaction. This temporary loss of identity is expecially significant because it helps make possible his participation in vandalism and any resulting elaboration of the act. The very fact that property destruction is generally a group act functions to reduce individual feelings of fear and guilt."

Stage 5 Aftermath & Retrospect

At this stage the participant's perspective of the act is important in ascertaining both motive for and feeling about the destructive behavior itself. Feelings of guilt or satisfaction are usually expressed in terms of a convenient rationalization. When the motive is born out of a frustration,

resentment or prejudice, it is usually described as a justifiable form of retaliation or punishment. When motivated out of a sense of boredom or desire for status the feelings are often a mixture of "rebellion, guilt and malicious delight."

Conception of the act as "just a joke" implies the image of "prankster", and not a delinquent; it excludes conception of right and wrong and thus responsibility - eleminating the possibility of a negative self-image. The vandal often resorts to various rationalizations including the idea that there are no "good" boys but only "lucky" ones, e.g., ones who have not been caught; and that particular places (the school and its property) are acceptable targets for vandalism.

In this connection the process of attempting to ascribe a certain degree of social acceptance or tolerance of the act by the vandal is not only a significant revelation of the act itself, but adds an important dimension to gaining insight on the vandal as well. Definition of the act as a simple prank or just "having fun" presents a rationalization which tends to neutralize any guilt feelings on his part, and which in turn represents the internalization of sub-cultural norms regarding the sanctity and worth of public and personal property. Peer groups norms thus assumes a high degree of importance since vandalism is more often a group form of behavior demanding a higher loyalty than society's expectations of conformity to its standards.[5]

Stein and Martin assert that among vandals apprehended a significant source of motivation is the desire to emulate older boys, as well as the competitive urge "to see who was the best shot." Vandalism of this kind, they point out, seems to occur routinely in many communities, and more particularly churches, schools, abandoned homes are the "institutionalized targets" habitually sought out by boys bent on destoying property.[6]

Using Cohen's typology of vandalism which describes motivation as:

a) acquisitive: damage which is the result of an initial attempt to gain money or property
b) tactical: damage which is the result of a consequential goal, e.g. setting fire to the school in order to avoid examinations
c) ideological: damage which is the result of an attempt to make a political point, e.g., breaking embassy windows during a demonstration

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[5] Ibid., p. 103.

[6] Herman Stein and John Martin, "Swastika Offenders," Social Problems: 9, Spring 1962, p. 63.

d) vindictive: damage which is the result of a frustration and desire to gain revenge against those considered responsible
e) play: damage which is done in the context of a game or competition
f) malicious: damage which is the result of a rage and which on the surface appears wanton but is usually directed at a symbolic target.

Stein and Martin found that in 90% of the cases of apprehended vandals motivated by vindictiveness, psychiatric examination was called for. In over half the cases, social worker investigation indicated that the father's role in the home was inadequate and family relationships were generally described as "poor". In over half the cases, failure to adjust to the demands of the school was also a problem.

While one out of four vandals in general come from what is described as a "broken home", in the cases of vindictive vandalism research by Stein and Martin it was three out of five. Interestingly enough, of the particular kind of vindictive vandalism explicit in the study, i.e., painting swastika symbols on synagogue walls, only one out of twenty-nine such vandals apprehended was below average in intelligence, and only two of the twenty-nine had a previous delinquency record.[7] The children who participated in vindictive vandalism were more frequently characterized in their study by a personal and social pathology.

The psycho-sociological pre-conditions indentified with vandalism include:

1) An unsatisfactory and unsatisfying performance in school (despite an average intelligence)
2) Strained relations with family
3) The absence of a virile adult male figure with whom the child can identify. (Mothers, not fathers, tend to dominate family relationships; fathers are generally characterized as weak, disturbed and absent)
4) A feeling of victimization and unworthiness (a sense of self-inadequacy and inferiority)
5) Strong status needs among peers (a tendency to lean heavily on group relations for support)

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[7] Ibid., p. 65.

6) The presence of a cohesive friendship group
7) Non-involvement in supervised recreation activities
8) Access to mass media stimuli which provides the behavior an aura or daring and provocativeness
9) Tolerance of the behavior on the part of significant adults
10) Lack of, or non-utilization of supervised recreational activities accessible to children of the community.

In addition to the psycho-sociological variables there is that of opporunity (Cloward and Ohlin).[8] This is a situation, when present, makes possible, perhaps even attractive, the fulfillment of the deviant act. The event of Hallowe'en is a case in point wherein vandalism behavior is both expected and tolerated. Indeed, it even provides a learning structure in the form of dramatic recitations of Hallowe'en escapades and descriptions of destructive acts by peers and by the media.

Abandoned houses with windows already broken or a school building which is no longer functioning as such, or which is in a relatively secluded area, offer targets consistent with the Cloward-Ohlin opportunity theory. This is not to state, however, that the authors deny, within the normative structure of gang or peer group behavior, that the participant in vandalism responsible for the suggestion or instigation of the activity and its direction does so in the hope of raising his status among the fellow participants.

There are some who believe that for some maladjusted boys vandalism has become a way of life - a form of recreation. Like cigarette smoking for some adults, it can, they content, become a psychologically dependent habit. Some others believe that the juvenile vandal often acts out of idleness, a sense of boredom or frustration. Psychiatrists, judges, social workers and law enforcement people speak of "rebellion against authority," "disrespect for the law," "the much overplayed rights of the individual." With respect to the latter they charge we have gone "too far" to protect the rights of individuals at a tremendously high cost to others in our society; "the pendulum has swung too far to one side and for some reason has stayed there while the machinery of good citizenship and respect for law and order has broken down."[9]

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[8]Cloward, R. & Ohlin, V., Delinquency and Opportunity, p. 161-171

[9]Bennett,Joseph W., op. cit., p. 119

III. DIFFICULTIES IN PREVENTION

Anyone who thinks there is an easy formula for stopping the destruction of school property by thoughtless and sometimes malicious individuals is bound to be disillusioned. The necessary responses to vandalism must of necessity be varied because the kinds of vandalism and their causes are varied. As described earlier on, no single definition fits the vandal. Not all school vandalism is committed by youths who are basically bad; some are only misguided. Some voluntarily help repair and pay for the damage and, in this one respect at least, it sometimes has a wholesome effect. But not all vandals are so easily reached. Some are hard core specimens of juvenile delinquency for whom severe punishment may be the only answer. But one thing must be remembered - catching them is only part of the problem.

There is no easy answer to vandalism in our schools but the rising costs in the face of constantly rising needs for more facilities, funds, and services requires that this problem receives more attention than it has in the past.

Who is committing the vandalism in our schools? How old are they? What is their home and school background? Getting the facts on vandalism proves most difficult. Police records are rather difficult to analyze from a vandalism standpoint. Just where vandalism ceases to be juvenile delinquency and moves into the category of more serious types of crime, depends on many factors - including the age of the vandal. Furthermore, the police are generally much too busy trying to deal with major crimes to have to worry about vandalism. And so the answers to questions as to just who is doing the vandalism, the age, sex, family and school backgrounds cannot be exactly detailed from a study of police records. Nor are our schools exactly a richly abundant mine of information on this score. The bald truth of the matter is that they just don't know. And the reason is that from their own estimate school authorities judge that only 10% of the youths committing acts of vandalism are apprehended in the first instance. Secondly those in charge of the schools are, in what they consider to be in the best interest of the child and his family, reluctant to release any personal information about the vandal when in the rare instance he is apprehended.

The research difficulties notwithstanding, what do the authorities say about it? First there is general agreement that vandalism is committed

in a gang context; that sex is a determining factor in that the vast majority of cases involve males; the age parameters involved is seven years to twenty-one years with a median range of eleven to fifteen years of age and a median age of school vandals set at thirteen years. These are youths who are generally allowed by their parents to be out late hours of the night. The target schools frequently have in common a scanty surveillance system or, more often than not, none at all.[10]

According to the school authorities, 95% of their student population is law-abiding with a considerable portion of the remaining 5% described as "one-time vandals" only. They may engage in an act of vandalism and then, realizing the wrongness of their act, voluntarily cease and do not participate any further. But the gloomy outlook is that if only 5% of the Canadian public and separate school population participate in vandalism as some experts believe, then it means we have approximately 300,000[11] vandals loose in Canadian society today.

There are in these figures what are described as "hard core" types of vandals who seem to be high repeaters and who go from school to school, to parks, playgrounds and campgrounds many times leaving in their wake a litter of destruction in their path, with no respect for the law or for other people. These repeating vandals are well on their way to major crimes and sooner or later many of them will be caught by the authorities for more serious crimes. Should we allow them to go on destroying our schools or should we try to control them now?

The dollar damage, as indicated earlier, these vandals cause is fantastically high and is rising much faster than our population growth rate. We are providing facilities at a faster rate than ever before, thus there are more vandals and more places to be vandalized. We can take little comfort in the knowledge that only a relatively small proportion of our youth engages in vandalism, especially when one considers how much dollar damage can be the result of a few wild frenzied minutes of destruction on the part of a handful of youths. This must also be viewed in the light of the highly improbable

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[10] F.B.I. Statistics Report (1967)

[11] Based on Statistics Canada figures for total school population 1971.

chance of apprehension and dire consequence to the perpetrator. F.B.I. statistics indicate that the percentage of crimes against persons solves (including murder, manslaughter, forcible rape and aggravated assault) is in the range of 61% - 88% whereas crimes against property solved (including robbery, burglary, larceny, auto theft) range from 18% - 30%. Crimes of violence rose 75% in the decade of the 60's while crimes against property were up 91% by comparison.[12] Because, as indicated earlier, the police are disinclined to get too involved in incidents of vandalism due to resource priorities elsewhere, this means that the chances of a vandal getting caught is probably less than one in ten. This fact when added to still another, admittedly undocumented, fact that when caught the chances are better than 90% that nothing beyond a severe warning or mild reprimand will be forthcoming, should give the reader some insight into the particular circumstances which provide the vandal with the encouragement and assurance that he may proceed to wreak this havoc with impunity.

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[12] F.B.I. Statistics (1967)

IV. PROPOSALS FOR DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM

Abdication of responsibility by indifferent, uncaring parents is often pointed out as a contributing factor to vandalism. Judge John Forte of a Youth Court in Massachusetts commenting on this said:

> "You look at kids sitting by their parents, awaiting trial in our new courtroom. They are whittling their initials on the benches while their parents look on, unconcerned. The unhappy kids have parents who care too little to notice what they're doing, much less instruct them."[13]

William Lenahan, a Youth Bureau Officer, speaking to a PTA meeting observed:

> ..."kids haven't changed appreciably in the last fifty years, nor the last five hundred, but their parents have. They don't know what their children are doing or where they are."[14]

He suggested parents were seriously derelict in their duty to allow youngsters between twelve and fourteen years of age out at night without knowing where they were going, with whom, and under whose supervision.

> "Many fathers and mothers don't dare exercise such authority. Others do not think they should because they want their children to learn responsibility and to make their own decisions and their own mistakes. This position should be re-examined."[15]

J. Edgar Hoover, former head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, pointed out parental failure as one of the major contributing factors which would have to be dealt with in order to seek effective solution. He charged:

> "Too many parents make the mistake of neglecting to teach their children the doctrine of individual responsibility. Substituting self-indulgence through giving the child too much too soon, many an otherwise intelligent adult has developed a blind spot concerning the conduct of his child. As a consequence, the child often matures with a warped sense of values because his self-dicipline was undermined by his parent's abdication of adult responsibility."[16]

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[13] Awake, August 22, 1974, p.5

[14] Loth, David, Crime in the Suburbs, p. 24

[15] Loc. cit.

[16] Ibid, p. 102

As a preventative measure, Hoover urged the doctrine of parental accountability for the delinquent actions of their children:

> "Where parental neglect is found to be a factor in delinquency, society has every right to demand that the parents of the young offender be called into court and be required to account for their actions. Neglectful mothers and fathers are no less a menace to the community than are their children. Let them be identified and publicly recognized as such."[17]

Thirty-eight state legislatures have enacted laws holding parents responsible for up to several hundred dollars school damage caused by their child. Making parents pay for the damage their children cause may in individual instances have a positive effect, but in most cases it is meaningless because the offenders are rarely caught.[18] Furthermore, as one juvenile officer puts it: "The payment of money won't do away with vandalism - it just papers over this sickness with dollar bills. When parents devote sufficient time and attention to their kids because they want to - not because they are afraid of future bills on fines - the problem of vandalism will begin to recede."

The failure of our courts to properly punish offenders has been offered by many, particularly police authorities, as a leading reason for the huge increase in vandalism. The typical pattern, they charge, is: arrest, fine, reprimand, and release. Sometimes charges are not laid at all - depending on the age of the vandal.

Joseph Bennett in his book, Vandals Wild, describes a marauding gang of motorcyclists in California which blew up two unoccupied homes with dynamite. They were also accused of burglary and shooting more than one hundred bullets into the walls, ceilings, floors and appliances. Some furniture was stolen. There subsequently ensued considerable argument among the attorneys, trial judge and sheriff as to just what the boys should be tried for. Their ages ranged from 17-24. The trial judge reduced the dynamiting charge (a felony) to malicious mischief (a misdemeanor) which carries the same penalty as simply breaking a window pane of glass. Defense attorneys maintained that due to the publicity their clients could not get a fair trial and that "these minors need the protection of the court."[19]

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[17] Ibid., pp. 104-105

[18] Loc. cit.

[19] Bennett, Joseph W., op. cit. p. 149.

Incidents of lenient treatment like the above prompt critics of our courts to insist that present vandalism laws undergo review for further clarification and strengthening. They point out that we are badly in need of bold and positive programs of action against youthful criminality. No suggestion of merit should be dismissed because it offends what they call "the bleeding hearts"of the community "whose charitable concern over the rights of youthful criminals has completely blinded them to the rights of law-abiding members of society."[20]

One such "positive" program that has come in for its share of both criticism and applause has been that of the "open court" instituted by Judge Lester Loble of Helena, Montana. Its purpose ostensibly was to allow open hearings and publicity - giving names of juveniles who were accused of committing a felony. Its rational basis is that the fear of certain punishment and publicity would work hand in hand to combat crime. Judge Loble maintains that since the "Open Court" went into effect (1961) there has been a 49% decrease in the number of juvenile felony cases.

While it is his opinion that 97% of the kids today are as good as those of past generations, he holds that the remaining 3% - the "hoodlums of today" - are worse.[21]

> "If a youth is old enough and tough enough to topple a tombstone, wreck a church or a school house, he is old enough and tough enough to have a public trial with his parents in the front row and full newspaper coverage."[22]

Those who advocate the "open court" concept point out four essential advantages:

1) Confidence in the courts is restored.

2) The "good" youngster is protected.

3) Indifferent and delinquent parents become aware of their responsibilities and exercise better control of their children because they do not want the publicity.

4) The youngsters who undergo the "ordeal" do not go bad by reason of it or become worse. They become better by learning to respect the law.

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[20] Ibid., p. 150

[21] Ibid., p. 151

[22] Ibid., p. 150

While it is generally agreed that vandalism in the schools is a reflection of a generally sick society, school officials are nevertheless forced with the practical problem of dealing with it. And this means giving immediate consideration to those measures which offer the most effective deterence and detection. Thus security of the physical plant has become for many the operative framework for the war on vandalism. Challenging the argument that the ultimate extension of the maximum security approach would be to transform our schools into "forbidding fortresses", and that the emphasis should be placed on more effective educational programs in schools, homes and community, Edward D. Brady, Director of Security for the Chicago schools counters:

> "Educational programs, more often than not reach the 99% of the pupils who wouldn't vandalize schools anyway. This is why you need devices and guards to protect against vandalism..."[23]

The best way to achieve security, according to those with the most experience, is to adopt physical and psychological measures that would deter the potential vandal in the form of equipment that would make the act difficult in the first instance and in the second instance the sure knowledge that apprehension is a likely consequence if the act is committed.

Surveys of school districts reveal a myriad of measures adopted as the result of guidance provided by professional security officials. The recommendations include:

1) Minimization of glass areas and the use of polycarbonate material in those areas where the most breakage occurs.
2) Use of solid doors on the building exterior.
3) Use of window screens.
4) Fencing in of cul-de-sacs.
5) Provision for adequate exterior lighting.
6) Use of barbed wire barriers to prevent access to roofs.
7) Use of carpets only when necessary.
8) Installation of electric fixtures that are "vandal proof.".[24]

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[23] "Vandalism and Violence", Education, U.S.A., p. 18

[24] Jack Jones, "Built-in Protection", B.C. Trustee, pp. 6-9, 1972

All of these measures suggest what architects should be doing to protect against vandalism in the initial design of the school. For example, according to a publication of the National School Public Relations Association (1971):[25]

> "Many school officials point out that new windowless schools would do much to alleviate the high loss of window breakage and the time required for maintenance. Also saved would be money spent for shades. In addition - windowless schools are safer, since they eliminate the possibility of injury from broken glass . . . There is no reason for not building them in this day of air conditioning.
>
> . . . in the design of new schools, faculty lavatories should be located near those for students to reduce loafing and damage in this area. Roofs with plastic domes instead of skylights would probably be less accessible to vandals and thieves. Also being recommended are closure plates for expensive mechanical equipment, better protected and more ample storage rooms, tougher wall and equipment surfaces and more sophisticated door and window hardware . . ."

For older schools, architectural changes suggested include bricking up of openings in storerooms and basements that have continual entry problems; installing porcelain paneling in vulnerable glazed areas; and using corregated vinyl sheets over broken glass block areas.[26]

A Small Business Administration report notes:

> "The architect plays a key role . . . in making intrusion more difficult, more complex, more time consuming and therefore more uncertain. Measures in these directions are vital because they are equivalent to quicker times of arrival of police . . . The neglect of architects is neither sinister nore deliberate. It appears to be due to an almost complete lack of awareness that the details of security against crime should be an essential function of the architect."[27]

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[25] Op. cit., p. 27

[26] Loc. cit.

[27] Loc. cit.

To this end the Superintendent for Maintenance of the Vancouver Public Schools suggests as "built-in protection" that architects: plan window areas that face away from isolated locations; provide for the elimination of climable appendages on the building's exterior and secure storage areas for special equipment; eleminate in their design ledges, alcoves, semi-hidden areas, and as many entry doors as possible.[28]

Other architectural design changes include the use of "tamper-proof locks" and the elimination of gravelled and stone areas in the immediate vicinity of the school grounds.

In a newsletter published by the Educational Facilities Laboratories, a non-profit corporation established by the Ford Foundation to help schools with their physical problems, there appears a comprehensive treatment on the subject of preventative school planning as a means of minimizing damage from vandalism, based on a study by Professor John Zeisel of the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University. It suggests five major design issues pertaining to alleviating the problem of property damage in the schools. The first three: roofs; entrances; and predictable "rough play" spaces relate to the question of access and proximity to unprotected windows and fragile hardware. The other two issues relate to damage potential of walls and ground materials.

With respect to roof access they suggest several design countermeasures that would make access to roofs from the ground as difficult as possible:

1. Ensure there are no footholds on exterior surfaces.
2. Avoid placing hardware where it provides footholds.
3. Plant unclimable trees and bushes close to a building.
4. Locate climable planting far from walls.
5. Remove built-in footholds from nearby utility poles.
6. Plan walls too high to climb with accessible ladder substitutes such as a 12-ft.-long piece of lumber.
7. Avoid installing unnecessary doors and windows. Use the same glazing and hardware as on the ground floor.

In the attempt to prevent damage and assist in the apprehension of vandals, all manner of security measures have been adopted by various school districts and are described in detail in the various publications referenced in the bibliography of this report. A listing of these measures (by no means

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[28] B.C. Trustee - op. cit., p. 7

to be considered comprehensive) includes:

1) Electronic surveillance systems consisting of motion detectors and door switches placed in high value areas and entrances. The schools are zoned and an alarm signal is carried to a central station by a semi-dedicated telephone line.

2) Use of police car radio frequency monitoring the surveillance system.

3) Local alarm system triggering off a loud bell or siren which can also include flashing lights.

4) Caretaker hours staggered over a twenty-four hour period so that a school employee is always in the building.

5) Providing for a caretaker who literally lives on the school grounds, generally in a mobile home.

6) Installation of high chain wire fencing, topped with barbed wire, excluding use of all school building areas during non-school hours.

7) Use of trained dogs who patrol the school corridors during the night.

8) A system of "zone patrolling" by the police.

9) Positive identification of all equipment to discourage resale.

Other approaches suggest the enlistment of student, community or neighborhood cooperation in the form of "patrols" or "vigilante" committees. Soliciting particularly the assistance of residents in close proximity to the schools; encouraging them to report to the police observations or suspicions of vandalism.

There are those who encourage a greater community use of the school buildings as a deterrent to vandalism based on the premise that use of the schools at night tends to discourage vandals and might help improve the relationship between community and school and thus encourage the kind of proprietary interest and cooperation suggested above.

Addressing himself to the point of general responsibility for school security, the Plant Manager for the Carleton Public School System in Ottawa, Ontario suggests the use of the community/parent volunteer:

> "The community association could be made aware of the problems relating to the particular school, and the community association, parents adjacent to the school, and the students could then assist in the development

> of a plan to protect the facilities. A committee of this type could consist of one administrator, the principal, one or two teachers, one or two students, three parents, the head custodian, and any other interested parties. The group could be fitted into a large family of schools group and be overseen by the system as a whole through the security officer to ensure a uniform plan and program for the benefit of the entire system."

Some school districts have employed a chief security officer who, in the words of Robert Potts, head of security for the Detroit school system, must be "a person of many facets". He describes the position as unique and demanding "in that each situation seems to require special handling."[29] His duties include the analysis and evaluation of all acts of vandalism; the investigation of all acts of unauthorized entry, burlary and robbery, and to suggest, implement and supervise preventative programs devised to reduce or eliminate vandalism and malicious mischief.

All plans affecting security should have the school principal as a focal point, he maintains:

> "The principal is accountable to central administration, as well as to the community as a whole. The security officer and the plant department would serve him in an advisory capacity and would not interfere, in any manner, with the operation of the school. The principal, in turn, should assign the responsibility for school security to a number of his supervisory staff and the head custodian. They should act as chief contracts for central administration, police or other persons involved in school security.
>
> Procedures should be established for all types of emergencies; staff and students should be fully informed of such procedures. Much can be done to reduce the costs of security and vandalism by in-service training and the establishment of procedures for staff, students and custodians. Contact should be maintained with community agents, parent groups and the police to avert disruptions in school buildings. The role of the principal would be enhanced as the chief administrator of the school, if he involved supervisors, guidance, teachers, parents and students in the formulating/decision-making process, thus making the school more responsive to the changing needs and aspirations of the community that it serves."

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[29] Vandalism and Violence - op. cit., p. 31

In considering this whole area of the quest for maximum security there are many factors which must be kept in mind by those school officials who see in the measures described above "the answer" to the problem.

To begin with, while the research indicates a whole host of procedures adopted or recommended to bring vandalism under control, it has failed to reveal any one procedure or technique that can be universally applied to all school districts. One procedure which works well under one set of environmental factors does not guarantee that it will work well for a school district in a different locale. This same admonition might even well apply to individual schools within a school district.

This point was emphasized in a report by the Educational Research Services entitled, "Protecting Schools Against Vandalism" which stated:

> "Rarely can two schools within the same district be protected in the same way. The grounds and buildings themselves may dictate what can or cannot be done."[30]

No district in the ERS survey reported exclusive use of any one protective device in all of the schools in its system and in some districts almost every school used a different type of protective measure.[31]

Still another consideration is the balance sheet between the dollar costs in vandalism losses as opposed to the dollar costs of the security measures adopted to reduce or prevent the vandalism. In this conncection those who advocate the "security or deterrence" principle insist that school officials include in their calculations not only the actual loss in dollars, but also the costs in lost educational time resulting from vandalism as well as the "social costs" intrinsic to the problem in the form of involvement by the police, courts and prisons when vandalism is not stopped or minimized.

Officials in charge of the business aspect of school operation call for a "cost effectiveness" approach and observe that in many school districts where vandalism control measures have been instituted no objective evaluation has taken place in terms of the resultant reduction in dollar losses. The decision by the San Francisco School Board to substitute unbreakable plastic material for glass in windows at an estimated cost of more than

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[30] As described in Vandalism and Violence, Ibid., p. 20

[31] Loc. cit.

$100,000 is a case in point.[32]

E.L. Koch, in an article on the strategies for dealing with school vandalism cites the case of a Western Canadian urban school system which instituted a security alarm system at an annual cost of $177,000 which was almost double that of the losses due to vandalism which was estimated at $100,000 annually.[33]

The Stanford Research Institute which has investigated this problem, observed its report that the costs for providing maximum security would be "prohibitive". They warn:

> ". . . even if a school were provided with the best security system that money can buy, we believe that this system would fail if it were the only preventative measure taken. Evidence acquired over the past several years indicates that this maximum security approach to controlling vandalism has proved ineffective over time."[34]

Furthermore, maximum deterrence, even if it were assumed to be attainable, requires maintenance of security vigil on an around the clock basis. This means that more guards, watchmen, hall aides, police in schools, community volunteers must be involved. This process has a tendency to escalate as evidenced by what is happening in many school districts that are attempting this elusive goal. The city of Los Angeles, for example, which employed fifteen security guards in 1964 now has a force of over 100 and New York City now has 382 at a cost of over $3.5 million. In Houston, the cost of security officers increased from $20,000 in 1972 to $389,000 in 1973.[35]

Still others have expressed alarm at the "concentration camp" effect and the impact on the "inmates" that are the consequence of the measures described above. One school official voiced his concern by stating:

> "These schools which have utilized high fences, windowless walls, elaborate alarms and even watchdogs have probably achieved their main objective: namely security. But except in extreme cases, schools cannot be designed to resemble dark forbidding monoliths intended to repel

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[32] Loc. cit.

[33] E.L. Koch, "Strategies for Coping With School Vandalism," The Alberta School Trustee, March 1975, p. 4.

[34] School Vandalism: A National Dilemma, p. 34

[35] James Kilpatrick - "School Vandalism A Crisis," Salt Lake City Tribune, April 10, 1975.

> all intruders. No one can fault us if in our frustrated moments we look to these absolute solutions to find our peace of mind; but if we are worth our salt, we must be more ingenious than to sacrifice any portion of the quality of the environment for learning."[36]

Aesthetic considerations aside, security measures such as sophisticated electronic surveillance systems, plastic windows, exterior lighting, caretakers in mobile homes, guard personnel are expensive. Some are highly questionable: the installation of high chain wire fences topped with barbed wire and the use of trained but nevertheless vicious dogs pose a problem not only in terms of expense but also in the image to the community they present - to say nothing of the danger of law suits.

The Division of Maintenance and Operation for the New York City school system reports the average installation cost of audio detection units at $2200 per building as of 1972 which, taking into account a conservative inflation factor, would mean a current anticipated expenditure of approximately $3500.[37]

A report on vandalism by the Calgary School Board indicates that alternatives to the use of regular plate glass such as plastics, armor plate and wire cast glass, besides presenting certain functional disadvantages, also are double and triple the cost, excluding additional expenses in installation.[38]

Citizens' vigilante committees and other forms of community or neighborhood cooperation pose not only difficulties of responsibility but also the problem of people who don't want to get "involved" and who fear retaliation.

All of these difficulties present school officials with a real dilemma, the resolution of which depends on the answers to the following questions:

a) How much deterrence does a school need and want?

b) How much can the school budget afford?

c) How much of a reduction in losses can be anticipated?

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[36] School Vandalism: A National Dilemma, op. cit. p. 23.

[37] Report of Division of Maintenance and Operation to Board of Education, City of New York, dated January 13, 1972, p. 1

[38] Report prepared for Maintenance Supervisors' Workshop held at Red Deer, Alberta, March 1,2,3, 1972, p. 7

d) Considering the cost and trouble to devise and maintain an adequate security system, can the school district afford to "sweep the problem under the rug" and accept its losses as a "normal" operating expense?

From this writer's viewpoint, supported by the research on school vandalism in the province of Alberta and the available data from various parts of the U.S. and Canada, the answer to the last question is decidedly negative, for the urban school districts at least. The costs are simply too high to ignore. The millions of dollars wasted annually would provide more buildings, teachers, teacher aides, teaching equipment, a better environment generally, and hence a better education for our nation's children.

Although mechanical preventative devices may be able to do an effective job of curtailing vandalism losses, perhaps the ultimate solution lies in a preventative educational program which involves a school-community approach and which would encompass community and student anti-vandalism projects such as poster and essay contests, assemblies, classroom discussions and lectures - all of which may help turn public and student apathy into an aggressive consciousness of responsibility in this area.

In Vandalism and Violence reference is made to the "growing trend" toward initiating liaison programs with the police authorities. Under these programs, a "juvenile specialist" is assigned to a school, generally junior or senior high, on a full or part-time basis with duties including patrolling school corridors and grounds, school athletic and social events; teaching safety and citizenship courses and assisting school guidance officials in counselling students.[39]

While there are many pros and cons involved, including the question of legality, the publication indicates that some school districts adopting this approach have reported a decrease in juvenile referrals of up to 50%.[40]

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[39] Vandalism and Violence, op. cit., p. 36.

[40] Ibid., p. 37.

What are the necessary steps a school district might take in order to implement a school-community approach?

1) Organize a task force involving representatives from all aspects of the community: educators, students, parents, taxpayers, business leaders, social agencies, city government, media, church, law enforcement and courts to analyze the problem, assess the needs, establish goals and generally "brainstorm" concerning strategies and then devise action plans.
2) Educate the community through extensive use of the media on a regular basis, annually or semi-annually, public releases of reported losses due to vandalism - leaving out the individual occurrences and nature of the acts. The report would include information as to total costs, together with its effect on district tax rates and giving what the same amount of revenue would buy in desirable educational services. Ostensibly this approach would make each member of the community personally aware of the urgency of the problem and hence hopefully, personally involved.
3) Extensive use of the media to diffuse innovative strategies for attacking the vandalism problem.
4) Establish an incentive in the form of a monetary reward granted to each school equal to one-half the savings effected by that school in vandalism costs. The funds could come by board appropriation or through efforts involving business and civic groups or a combination of both.
5) Adopt the "community school" concept which offers extended use of the schools by the adult members of the community.
6) Establish and maintain an attractive school building through beautification and clean-up campaigns to develop a sense of community responsibility and morale, as well as help promote the student's pride in <u>their</u> school.
7) Shared decision-making: through increased participation each person feels more accountable and a sense of ownership is developed. Students, teachers and parents are made an itegral part of any campaign rather than isolated from it.

8) Curricular approach wherein the topic of vandalism becomes a regular part of the school program to influence the students through a systematic indoctrination of respect for private and public property.

9) Intensify individual staff responsibility for stressing positive attitudes toward tidiness and care of each classroom, as well as a concern for the prevention of all general types of vandalism.

10) Enlist the aid of non-school agencies to provide supervision in schoolyard areas open to public use during non-school hours - particularly weekends.

The above are merely suggested activities rather than a formula. The important point is that it can no longer be considered as just a school problem. It must be a total community concern with each member of the community deriving benefit from a significant reduction in vandalism losses.

We must not, however, lose sight of the fact that the stability and continuity of family life stands out as the most important factor in the development of the child. It would seem, therefore, that the place of the home in the genesis of normal or delinquent patterns of behavior should receive greater practical recognition. The relationship is so strong that, if ways could be found to do it, a strengthening and preserving of family life, among the groups who need it the most, could probably accomplish more in the amelioration and prevention of vandalism (among other forms of delinquency) than any other single program yet devised.[41]

Officials involved in the "community involvement" program in Flint, Michigan, assisted by $20 million in funding from the Mott Foundation, and used as a model in combatting juvenile crime, candidly confess that in "thousands of cases" crime was not deterred.

> "Investigations revealed that children behaved well on the playground, but when they returned to their tragic homes, they reverted to the influence of their environment." [42]

Most school officials responding to the Education U.S.A. survey agreed that there were limits to what the school could effectively accomplish and

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[41] T.P. Monahan, "Family Status and the Delinquent Child," Social Forces 35, March, 1957, pp. 250-258.

[42] Vandalism and Violence, op. cit., p. 48

that the answer or at least part of the answer to any attempt to curtail vandalism rests in community efforts completely involving parents, students, teachers and citizens alike.

There are no guarantees of success in whatever methods are employed in the fight against vandalism in our schools. But of this we can be certain: barricading school buildings will not do the job. Piece meal efforts will surely prove to be of limited value. My thesis of a triadical approach between Home-School-Community offers a challenge in that research in substantiation of this thesis is limited, and the research of others is scarce and only recently have systematic studies attempted to correlate reduction in school vandalism with home, school and community education efforts. Our best hope and most rigorous efforts must be centered on <u>action</u> programs rather than reaction programs.

V. A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Phase One of the 1974 study on school vandalism throughout the province of Alberta, completed and submitted to the Department of Education in July 1975, concerned itself with the status of the problem with respect to dollar costs to school jurisdictions in various categories of damage and thus was essentially a quantitative study.

Questions raised by the Planning and Research Branch of the Department in the assessment of the initial study addressed themselves to the desirability of a more in-depth, qualitative examination of the data focusing on ascertaining the specific variables which could account for the disparate costs between different schools within a school jurisdiction, as well as between public and separate, urban and rural systems.

Accordingly Phase II of this study was proposed and authorized in late 1975 and completed in September 1976.

The basic premise of the latter study is that while a specific instance of property damage due to vandalism might be the result of the activity of a given disturbed child, the presence of a high or low rate of damage in a given school is not necessarily a function of the chance concentration or absence of such individuals within a given school. Rather, it is assumed in this study that schools with high damage rates may be distinguished from low damage schools on the basis of a number of identifiable variable factors. These include:

a). School "climate" - organization and philosophy of school; nature of student population and staff; kind of inter-personal relations maintained between principal and students; principal and staff; teacher and students, parents and teachers, custodian and students.

b). Nature of cachement area - socio-economic profile (mobility, broken homes, working mothers, recreational facilities, shopping centres, general delinquency rate).

c). School-community relations - parental interest in an involvement with school; degree of cooperation and support.

d). Architectual design of school - wings, L-shaped additions, inner courtyards, residential isolation, points of entry, composition of materials.

e). Security provisions - custodial workload over 24 hours, continual use of school, screened windows; wired roof access; fencing; master key restrictions; security patrols; zone policing; electronic surveillance.

The procedure of research focused primarily on schools, elementary, junior high and senior high, within school jurisdictions which were identified by central office records as high and low incidence schools.

Accordingly, twenty-seven schools, public and separate were visited in the urban school districts of Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Calgary and Edmonton. The school visitation included: (a) observation of the physical layout (b) a semi-structured interview with the principal and, in many instances, an interview with the head custodian.

On the basis of the above, responses were tabulated with respect to sixty variables subsumed under (a) through (e) above. The results judged significant are as follows:

> In all cases, regardless of level of school, within the public system, staff-student relations reported as "Good" as opposed to "Fair" or "Poor" were positively related with low vandalism schools. Sixty percent of the high incidence schools reported staff-study relations as fair to poor.

Speculation raised by this investigator in Phase One with respect to the contribution of the school building itself to the problem of vandalism was confirmed by the findings in Phase Two. The age of the building was

a significant factor between high and low incidence schools. Almost eight-two percent of the low vandalism schools were less than 16 years old, whereas sixty-nine percent of the high vandalism schools were over 16 years in age.*

Invariably it was discovered that schools that had experienced a series of building additions over a period of years were more likely to have vandalism problems; close to seventy-nine percent of high vandalism schools had this factor in common. In all cases of high incidence among the junior and senior high schools studied there was an indication, furthermore, that the design or lack of design of the several additions exacerbated the problem.

The initial interior design of the school, materials used, aesthetic appointments, etc. was perceived as related to the problem, particularly in senior high schools; eighty percent of high vandalism schools so reporting. This is contrasted with seventy-five percent of low incidence junior and senior high schools who saw no problem in interior design. There was no significant relationship of this particular factor in the elementary schools.

The geographic location of the school; the degree of isolation, the amount of traffic - both pedestrian and vehicular, the concentration of schools within a small radius are also factors of significance. Over two-thirds of the junior and senior high schools designated as of low incidence were desirably located with respect to patterns of traffic, whereas one hundred percent of high vandalism junior highs and sixty

*The median age of low vandalism schools was 11 years while the median for high vandalism schools was 21 years.

percent of senior highs and sixty-seven percent of elementary schools indicate heavily trafficked areas.

School climate was a factor determined by a highly subjective judgement on the writer's part, based on responses to queries regarding failure rate; degrees of absence or presence of permissiveness as revealed by the pervasiveness of rules and regulations; staff-student relations; administrative style as related to the extent responsibility appeared to be shared; student morale as indicated by an active student council; failure and truancy rate, strappings, detentions, suspensions and expulsions, and degree of student participation in extra-curricular activities. This factor was found to be very much related to the extent of vandalism.

One hundred percent of the cases involving elementary and junior high schools judged as having a "good school climate" were in the low vandalism category, while eighty-three percent of the senior highs were likewise related. This contrasts with schools in the high category where eighty-three percent of the junior highs, eighty percent of the senior highs and sixty-seven percent of the elementary schools had school climates judged from "fair to poor."

Of the variables subsumed under the school climate factor, the most significant appeared to be the presence or absence of a shared responsibility and an active student council. In all the senior high schools where responsibility appeared to be shared in large measure there was a low degree of vandalism incidence. This was also true in two-thirds of the junior highs. Where authority seemed highly centralized, eighty-three percent and eight

percent of the sampled junior and senior highs respectively had a high incidence of vandalism. Shared responsibility did not seem to differentiate the elementary schools. An active student council was present in eighty-three percent of the low vandalism schools and was present in two-thirds of the junior highs while two-thirds of the high vandalism junior high schools and sixty percent of the senior highs did not report an active student council, or in some instances, no student council at all.

The community factors revealed to be related included: working parents, broken homes, relationship with the school; parental involvement and cooperation; the presence of low-cost housing.

In all cases of sampled schools in the high vandalism category there was a high percentage of working parents reported. In eighty-three percent of the junior highs and one hundred percent of the elementary schools with high vandalism there was a high percentage of broken homes.

The quality of community relations and the degree of parental involvement and cooperation with the school was also related, particularly at the junior high level. In all low vandalism junior highs the community relations was described as "good" and parental involvement and cooperation was "high." In all high vandalism junior highs parental involvement was reported as "poor." This also applied to the elementary schools. This did not seem to be related to senior high schools.

The presence of low-cost housing projects was related in all sampled elementary schools but did not appear to be significant in the junior and senior highs.

When the sampled schools, regardless of grade level, were divided into public and separate system categories, no new factors that were related appeared. General school climate of separate schools, as in the case of the public schools, was a distinguishing feature between those with low and high vandalism. In all the separate schools of all levels where school climate was judged as "good" there was a low degree of vandalism and in all cases where it was "poor" or "fair" it was associated with high vandalism.

In all of the separate schools of the study that were in the high vandalism category, parental involvement was described as "poor" while in over seventy percent of the low vandalism schools it was "good."

Phase One of this study revealed rather startling and totally unexpected differences in costs per pupil due to vandalism between the public and separate systems. Phase Two attempted to ascertain qualitative differences between the two systems which could conceivably account for the rather invidious comparison in losses due to vandalism. None could be found. To be sure, the sample was quite limited; ten separate schools were included in the total of twenty-seven schools visited. Of the ten schools, three were in the high vandalism category. Therefore one school could alter the percentage of relationship rather dramatically.

Failure to uncover any singular characteristics of the separate school system, while confirming a previous study by Rossi and Rossi (1971), still leaves unanswered the statistical anamolies revealed in Phase One. In the absence of any evidence of qualitative difference or measured effects

of a non-secular education on the behavior of separate school students, this writer is led to the conclusion that the initial data received from the separate school jurisdictions in Phase One is suspect. That is to say, in the absence of a clear and universally applied definition of what specifically constitutes an act of vandalism, and a uniform system of reporting those acts, any comparisons between any school systems, whether public or separate, urban or rural, province to province, or even between schools within the same district, would be invalid and unreliable.

Phase Two of this study, in the opinion of the writer, is useful to the extent to which it reveals certain common characteristics which seem to be identified, from the perspective of frequency, to low and high vandalism schools. The tables below are illustrative:

TABLE I

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH VANDALISM SCHOOLS

CHARACTERISTIC	Population (N)	Frequency (f)	%
A. Junior High Schools			
Have had additions	6	4	67.8
Design of additions causes problems	6	4	67.8
Heavily trafficked area	6	6	100
Poor-fair school climate	6	6	100
Non-permissive rules and regulations	6	5	83.3
No active student council	6	4	67.8
No shared responsibility	6	5	83.3
Socio-Economic level: working to middle class	6	6	100
High number of broken homes	6	5	83.3
Poor parental involvement	6	6	100
B. Senior High Schools			
Have had additions	5	5	100
Design of additions causes problems	5	5	100
Poor-fair school climate	5	4	80
Non-permissive rules and regulations	5	3	60
No active student council	5	3	60
No shared responsibility	5	4	80
Heavily trafficked area	5	4	80

TABLE I - cont'd

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH VANDALISM SCHOOLS

CHARACTERISTIC	Population (N)	Frequency (f)	%
C. Elementary Schools			
Have had additions	3	2	67.8
Poor-fair school climate	3	2	67.8
Parents working - middle class	3	3	100
Both parents working	3	3	100
High number of broken homes	3	3	100
Poor-fair parental cooperation	3	3	100
(Low cost housing)	3	3	100

Many, if not most, of the variables described above when submitted to the chi square test of correlation proved to be statistically not significant. Those characteristics that were, however, are included in this report as an appendix for the interest of the reader. (TABLES III - X)

TABLE II

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOW VANDALISM SCHOOLS

CHARACTERISTIC	Population (N)	Frequency (f)	%
A. Junior High Schools			
Good staff/student relationships	3	3	100
Good school climate	3	3	100
Permissive rules & regulations	3	2	87.8
Active student council	3	2	67.8
Shared responsibility	3	2	67.8
Good community relations	3	3	100
Good parental involvement	3	3	100
B. Senior High Schools			
Good staff/student relationships	6	6	100
Good school climate	6	5	83.3
Permissive rules & regulations	6	5	83.3
Active student council	6	5	83.3
Shared responsibility	6	6	100
Isolation	6	4	67
C. Elementary Schools			
Good school climate	4	4	100
Good parental cooperation	4	4	100
(no low cost housing)	4	4	100

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS: re. School Vandalism Study

I. Uniform reporting system:

There are at the present time considerable obstacles standing in the way of a complete understanding about the precise nature of school vandalism: its quantitative qualitative magnitude, its costs to each school district and hence to the provincial government and the individual taxpayer.

The difficulty lies chiefly in two areas:

1) the lack of a standard operational definition of the term "vandalism"

2) the lack of a standard report form and system, conscientiously completed and followed by the appropriate school authorities.

As to definition: the primary and operative criterion must center on motivation of the act - that is to say, whether the damage caused was willful and with malicious intent. This obviously calls for the exercise of a discretionary judgment on the part of someone who has been designated by the school district to make that decision. On the basis of my study I would suggest that the principal of the school involved, in cooperation with the chief school custodian, is the logical person to assume responsibility for filling out the vandalism report form.

The report form itself should be standardized on a provincial-wide basis in order that any subsequent survey would be rendered more accurate, meaningful and valid.

The following information should appear on the report form for each incident of vandalism:

1. Name of school
2. Date of incident
3. Time of occurrence (estimated where necessary)
4. Location of damage
5. Description of damage
6. Costs of replacement or repair (to be completed by central office personnel - i.e. Chief Custodian, Secretary-Treasurer, Superintendent)

7. Police action (when applicable)
8. Apprehension (personal data, if available, on apprehended offenders)
9. Restitution (amount recovered by insurance or by offender)
10. Steps taken to prevent recurrence
11. General comments indicating probable cause.

These forms should be centrally located in each school district and filed chronologically by school and by category of damage (e.g. window glass, building or contents, theft, arson). Thus at any given time, the responsible educational officer should be able to report to any provincial educational agency or department, at any given point in time, the precise data on any and all categories of loss from the operation of each school in its district, as well as a total picture for the district itself. This information would be additionally useful in a school district's determination of the precise cost for operating each school in its system. It would also enable the school superintendent to pinpoint precisely the individual schools within his district that have the highest costs of damage or, perhaps more meaningful, the highest number of incidents of vandalism so that assessments could be made as to the probable factors and measures taken where possible to ameliorate those contributing conditions wherever and whenever possible.

II. An inquiry be undertaken to study the feasibility and desirability of an architectural design approach to the vandalism problem with the specific objective of determining precisely in what way the design of the school can contribute to the prevention or discouragement of vandalism; number, nature of, and materials used for windows; accessibility to roofs; elimination of alcoves; skylights and gravelled areas; location of landscaping; location of the school building itself;

outside lighting systems; elimination of decorative devices which are particularly vulnerable to vandalism; use of interior materials; e.g., furniture and paint which are damage resistant.

The end result of such a study might well produce a school building design which while flexible enough to leave room for local options would nevertheless in certain aspects call for standard architectural precautions or preventative design measures which must meet the approval of the designated provincial agency prior to grant approval of building funds.

III. There is a pressing need for establishing an experimental pilot project for testing out the cost effectiveness of the various preventative measures outlined in the main body of this report. Also what is needed is more precise information about the conditions which bring about the success or failure of anti-vandalism measures adopted by a particular school or school district.

IV. The necessity for more adequate lines of communication between all sectors involved in the problem - particularly between school, police and judical authorities. School authorities presently complain that they are rarely informed about the results of police investigations; police maintain they are often not told about the judicial disposition of an apprehended vandal which reaches the court, nor are they involved in the prosecution proceedings themselves when, as is often the case, a juvenile is involved.

V. Further study is called for with respect to establishing a correlation between density of population in a particular school building and the number of incidents of school vandalism which would seem warranted by the significant differences in per pupil costs between urban and rural schools.

VI. Significant variance between public and separate schools also warrants further investigation regarding the efficacy of introducing into the curriculum throughout grades 1 - 12 of what is currently called "moral education" - at least that aspect dealing with respect for public property as well as personal.

VII. Although mechanical preventative devices may be able to do an effective job of curtailing vandalism losses, perhaps the ultimate solution lies in a preventive educational program which involves a school-community approach and which would encompass community and student anti-vandalism projects, such as poster and essay contests, assemblies, classroom discussions and lectures - all of which may help turn public and student apathy into an agressive consciousness of responsibility in this area.

VIII. A more extensive qualitative study of schools than that carried on in Phase II of this study is warranted, concentrating on the identification of the kind of characteristics which seem to be common to schools of high incidence vandalism with the ultimate objective of preventing, eliminating or ameliorating those factors which are amenable to manipulation or change.

VII. APPENDIX (TABLES III - X)

TABLE III

DEGREE OF VANDALISM COMPARED WITH AMOUNT OF ACTIVE STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: FREQUENCY FOR A CHI-SQUARE TEST

Degree of Vandalism		Low Participation	Average Participation	High Participation	Total
Low	n	0	7	6	13
	%	0	53.85	46.15	100
High	n	5	4	3	12
	%	41.67	33.33	25.00	100
Totals		5	11	9	25

The value of chi-square is significant: chi-square = 6.790, exact probability = 0.033 with 2 degrees of freedom.

TABLE IV

DEGREE OF VANDALISM COMPARED WITH COMMUNITY RELATIONS: FREQUENCY FOR A CHI-SQUARE TEST

Degree of Vandalisim		Poor Relations	Fair Relations	Good Relations	Total
Low	n	2	1	10	13
	%	15.38	7.69	76.92	100
High	n	4	7	3	14
	%	28.57	50.00	21.43	100
Totals		6	8	13	27

The value of chi-square is significant: chi-square = 8.912, exact probability = 0.012 with 2 degrees of freedom.

TABLE V

DEGREE OF VANDALISM COMPARED WITH AMOUNT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: FREQUENCY FOR A CHI-SQUARE TEST

Degree of Vandalism		Poor Involvement	Fair Involvement	Good Involvement	Total
Low	n	3	3	7	13
	%	23.08	23.08	53.85	100
High	n	11	1	2	14
	%	78.57	7.14	14.29	100
Totals		14	4	9	27

The value of chi-square is significant: chi-square = 8.324, exact probability = 0.016 with 2 degrees of freedom.

TABLE VI

DEGREE OF VANDALISM COMPARED WITH GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION ACCORDING TO AMOUNT OF TRAFFIC: FREQUENCY FOR A CHI-SQUARE TEST

Degree of Vandalism		Heavy Traffic	Not Heavy Traffic	Total
Low	n	5	8	13
	%	38.46	61.54	100
High	n	11	3	14
	%	78.57	21.43	100
Totals		16	11	27

The value of chi-square is significant: chi-square = 4.492, exact probability = 0.033 with 1 degree of freedom.

TABLE VII

DEGREE OF VANDALISM COMPARED WITH DEGREE OF TRUANCY: FREQUENCY FOR A CHI-SQUARE TEST

Degree of Vandalism		Low Truancy	Average Truancy	High Truancy	Total
Low	n	9	4	0	13
	%	69.2	30.8	0.0	100
High	n	4	6	4	14
	%	28.6	42.9	28.6	100
Totals		13	10	4	27

The value of chi-square is significant: chi-square = 6.295, exact probability = .043 with 2 degrees of freedom.

TABLE VIII

DEGREE OF VANDALISM COMPARED WITH GENERAL SCHOOL CLIMATE: FREQUENCY FOR A CHI-SQUARE TEST

Degree of Vandalism		Poor Climate	Fair Climate	Good Climate	Total
Low	n	0	1	12	13
	%	0.0	7.69	92.31	100
High	n	6	5	3	14
	%	42.86	35.71	21.43	100
Totals		6	6	15	27

The value of chi-square is significant: chi-square = 14.049, exact probability = 0.002 with 2 degrees of freedom.

TABLE IX

DEGREE OF VANDALISM COMPARED WITH POLICY REGARDING RULES AND REGULATIONS: FREQUENCY FOR A CHI-SQUARE TEST

Degree of Vandalism		Permissive	Non-Permissive	Total
Low	n	8	5	13
	%	61.54	38.46	100
High	n	3	11	14
	%	21.43	78.57	100
Totals		11	16	27

The value of chi-square is significant: chi-square = 4.492, exact probability = 0.033 with 1 degree of freedom.

TABLE X

DEGREE OF VANDALISM COMPARED WITH POLICY REGARDING SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: FREQUENCY FOR A CHI-SQUARE TEST

Degree of Vandalism		Shared Responsibility	No Shared Responsibility	Total
Low	n	8	5	13
	%	61.54	38.46	100
High	n	3	11	14
	%	21.43	78.57	100
Totals		11	16	27

The value of chi-square is significant: chi-square = 4.492, exact probability = 0.033 with 1 degree of freedom.

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